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AUTHOR Polhemus, William D.
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ABSTRACT

For sixty years educators have been concerned with assessing staff "effectiveness." Perhaps we are still concerned with this problem because we have been chasing a will-of-the-wisp. In a profession such as education, we should attempt to measure staff competence rather than staff effectiveness. There are three basic ways of assessing teaching: by using presage criteria (teacher characteristics), by using product criteria (pupil gain), or by using process criteria (teaching activities). Teacher characteristics can be identified (if not measured), but they do not differentiate teaching acts. Student gain can be measured, but we can't measure how much is a result of the teacher's efforts and how much is a result of variables the teacher can't control. Teaching activities can be observed and recorded as data, and, by using a criterion-referenced assessment instrument (such as the Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities assessment program), these data can be related to a set of educational expectations. Assessment will not improve teaching by itself; what is done to improve the conditions revealed by the assessment is of major importance. (Author/JG)

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Remarks delivered to the
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By: William D. Polhemus
Coordinator
Arizona IOTA Program

Assistant Coordinator
National IOTA Program

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TEACHER EVALUATION: PROCESS ACCOUNTABILITY

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ASSESSING STAFF COMPETENCE

The topic today concerns assessing staff "effectiveness." Sixty years ago (in 1915) we were concerned about this very topic. Hazel Davis in the N.E.A. Journal of February, 1965, quoted teachers as saying "that teachers have the right to teach unhampered by any demeaning, artificial, arbitrary, perfunctory, and superficial rating.?

Are there no new problems under the sun? Or have we not come very far in solving the assessment one? I suspect the latter--we certainly have many new problems in secondary education; drug abuse, sexual permissiveness, student militancy, to name but three.

Perhaps the reason we still have the same old "evaluation syndrome" is that we have been chasing a "will-of-the-wisp."

I submit that in a profession you do not measure "effectiveness;" at least not if improvement is the objective! What indicates an effective doctor? One who never loses a patient? Nonsense! One who loses only 5%? Or one who correctly diagnosises all illnesses? Or is he one who loses 95% of his patients because he deals only with the most difficult cases?

Is an "effective" lawyer one who keeps all of his clients out of jail?

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Is an "effective" minister one who keeps all of his parishioners out of the divorce courts and manages to arrange for every soul to enter into heaven?

In spite of full divorce courts, full jails, and full grave yards, there must be some "competent" lawyers, ministers and doctors around. Oops--note, I changed a word--I spoke of "competence" not "effectiveness."

With no desire to play a semantic word game, let's look at the difference. A doctor performs an operation and the patient dies--does this mean that the doctor was not competent? Perhaps, but more likely it means that he was not effective.

What gives?

Webster defines "effectiveness" as "producing a decided, decisive, a desired effect. Competence" is defined as "having (the) requisite ability or qualities."

I maintain that we have been looking in the wrong direction in the teacher assessment area.

There are three basic ways, as we see it, of assessing "teaching." (Show transparencies)

1. Presage criteria - Teacher characteristics
2. Product criteria - Pupil gain (perhaps the ultimate criteria)
3. Process criteria - Teaching activities.

Dr. Ryans of the University of Hawaii, who has spent a lifetime dealing with teacher characteristics, told my associate Dr. Carpenter recently that we are still in the "stone age" in attempting to assess teaching through "characteristics." It is not that they

cannot be identified (I am not so sure that they can be measured) but they do not differentiate the teaching acts.

In the paper, "Characteristics of Good Teachers and Implications for Teacher Education," Don Hamachek said that students wanted teachers who were "good people," "flexible," "likeable," "total," etc. So do I, and I also want these characteristics in my wife, the milkman, and the local dog catcher.

Enough of characteristics--even though most of the 3,200 evaluation instruments (the latest count with which I am familiar) are composed largely of such items--e.g. "possesses growth potential."

Well, let's go to the other end of the continuum. There is the "student gain" approach. Certainly this is the ultimate criterion. The problem here is not so much that it cannot be measured--to limited degrees it can (we are not always certain what we are measuring, even in the cognitive area); what we can't really do with any degree of certainty is to say, "Johnny--nuts, I hate the name Johnny these days since you know what--let's say, "Bill," didn't learn because "Miss Susan" is a poor teacher. We can't even be certain that Bill did learn (note the "Coleman Report") because of her; yet somehow we don't worry about that aspect of the problem.

We can't be certain that he didn't learn because of "Miss Susan" because "Miss Susan" can't control the variables. She does not control his health, the lateness of the hour that he goes to bed, the fact that his father beats him everytime he gets drunk, and on, and on, and on...

And we have not even spoken of Bill's innate ability to learn, What is the learning potential of a twelve year old, blond, 5-6th grader, Swedish-Italian male, with an I.Q. of 100 and reading skills "on grade"

coming from a home with little or no reading material? Also, what about his previous educational experiences? You would have to isolate him and teach him in Skinner's so called "cage" to even come close to determining the learning potential.

Neither the doctor, the minister, the lawyer, nor the teacher can be held accountable for their "effectiveness."

Lessinger is quoted in the January 21st, 1974, issue of Education U.S.A. that to hold one party accountable for the acts of another was unreal. Note his further statement: (Show transparency)

> (1) The only thing a professional can be held accountable for is using sound practice...(2) personal accountability to the students, and (3) accountability to the profession...

Yes, we can be accountable for the things we do--and I don't mind so being held. In my work across the nation (presently with around 1,000 teachers a year for 36-40 hours) I find very few who object to being held to what I have come to call, "process accountability."

The things we do are observable or at least are verifiable. We who spent time in New York state know that some surgeon left a "sponge" inside Congressman Carlton King at Bethesda, Maryland, a few years ago. That was both observable and verifiable, and while the operation was effective (even the re-opening) that act wasn't in my opinion very competent.

I am sure that somewhere there is written instructions on how to perform an operation. I am certain that a phase somewhat akin to "be sure to remove all 'sponges'" is written down.

Hence, the next point! Since we can observe and verify what is done in the classroom, the behaviors of the teacher and students,

these can be recorded as data. But how to relate this data to expectations? It seems to me two approaches are possible. The norm reference approach or the criteria reference approach.

Using a norm referenced procedure hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of observations are completed and analyzed; then all are added up and divided by the total number of observations giving a "norm of expectations." We could then say that most teachers do this so all teachers should do so as well. But the norm is an average and I am not interested in averages!

Well, the other approach then is the criterion reference approach. Define what is to be done specifically; develop instrumentation to determine if the behavioral tasks so defined are being accomplished; train the people to use the instrumentation; cause them to become familiar with the definition, and allow for some local adaption of the instrumentation.

In a profession the only way you can determine what the tasks are that need to be done is ask the practitioner and the recipiants of the service. If teachers (I include principals as teachers) and parents can't tell you what needs to be done to produce "learning" then no one can!

Now there are a number of behavioral approaches to the assessment of instruction. "Mirrors for Behavior" lists over ninety.

In my work, limited as it is, I know of <u>only one</u> all inclusive, specific, written and comprehensive definition of teaching. It was known originally as <u>The Measure of a Good Teacher</u> and was developed in 1952 by the California Council on Teacher Education and was adopted by the California Teacher's Association Teacher Education Committee

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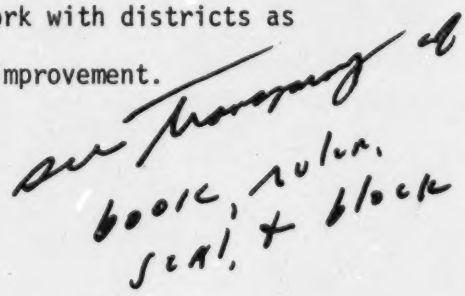
in 1955. Now known as The Role of the Teacher in Society-Six Areas of Teacher Competence, this all inclusive definition of teaching competence has been recognized by the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards of the National Education Association (1964).

The Role of the Teacher in Society breaks the teaching acts down into 100 observable or verifiable behavioral acts. These 100 teaching or professional acts (for all are not necessarily classroom acts) are further subdivided into six major areas of teacher competence:

1. Director of Learning
2. Advisor and Counselor
3. Mediator of the Culture
4. Link with the Community
5. Member of the Staff
6. Member of the Teaching Profession

The old Thorndyke principle still applies. Once defined something can be measured. The IOTA (The Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities) an assessment instrument, is designed to reflect through twenty-seven "scales" (each composed of five behavioral items) the factors of the definition just discussed.

The program with which I am associated is founded upon the definition, The Role of the Teacher In Society. People are trained to use the instrumentation and we continue to work with districts as they develop a planned program of professional improvement.



CRITERION - REFERENCED
Measurement

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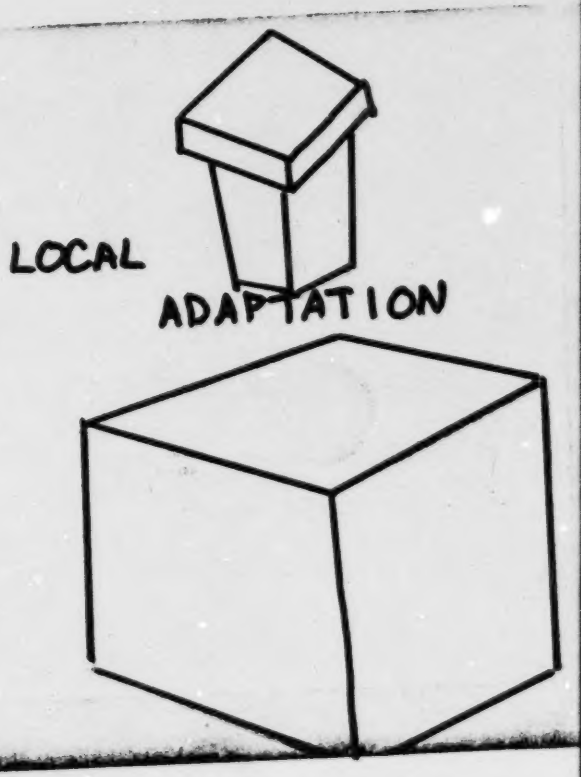
FOUR basic items:

IOTA has or provides for ALL four.



NOTES

But let's also remember that the assessment of teaching will not improve teaching. What is done to improve program conditions as revealed by the assessment is far more important!! For this, four elements are necessary.

1. First, and perhaps paramount, a desire and commitment on the part of all for improvement must exist. The period of "lip service" to improvement has slipped away.

2. Time--staff improvement takes time--not just administrative time--but total staff time--Goodlad has said it for us.

(Show Goodlad's slide)

> Teachers need time to observe what they are doing...and they need training in how to observe what they are doing. They need access to resources, to know the possible programs and assistances that are available...They need support and encouragement.

3. Money-time is money--the re-development of staff, the training of a total staff, etc. all require, while not excessive, the expenditures of funds beyond that usually allotted to "R. and D." New texts are important, new equipment also; but the postponement of a total text adoption across the total school would provide more than sufficient funds to accomplish the initial training of a school staff towards self-improvement through a criterion referenced procedure.

4. Willingness to re-order traditional operational procedures--a peer assessment, which is the only one that can accomplish the task program requires that things be done differently in order to provide the manpower to "field a total improvement program." There are no easy solutions to staff improvement.

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"TEACHERS NEED TIME TO OBSERVE WHAT THEY ARE DOING...AND THEY NEED TRAINING IN HOW TO OBSERVE WHAT THEY ARE DOING. THEY NEED ACCESS TO RESOURCES, TO KNOW THE POSSIBLE PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE...THEY NEED SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT."

Goodlad
Report on Education Research
January 30, 1974

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So it would appear that we, in my opinion, can assess competence but not effectiveness. Can such a program be called accountable? Let's check against the AASA's Handbook on accountability (1973).

The imperatives for accountability (in my context) "process accountability" are: (Show AASA transparency)

1. It must have knowledgeable designers--many programs do.

2. It must lead to improved education--one, at least shows the development of considerable change, towards the definition, in the ways teachers perform the teaching act and in their acceptance of students. The definition says this is "competent teaching," and I believe it.

3. It must recognize and accommodate diverse forms of participation--many programs do--The criterion referenced one to which I referred, operates very successfully K-14.

4. The program needs trained personnel before and during implementation. This is a key to all improvement programs.

5. The program must fulfill the conditions of the accountability concept. Does it have goals, plans, a method of developing a procedure and process and organization to carry out the objectives? Are all of these verifiable? We believe at least one program does.

6. The program must be judged politically obtainable. Does the where-withall and ability exist to carry it off? If a sponsoring group is not willing to spend the time, effort, and funds over the long term--forget it! <u>The professional development of teachers is not a short range project</u>.

I firmly believe that the profession holds within its hands, right now, the ability and knowledge needed to improve instruction through a procedure which I call "process accountability." I am firmly convinced that we can do it if we are devoted to this task and do not cloud the issue with threats of punishment or reward.